



PRESS RELEASE

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\$680,000 IN PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS GRANTS TO TARGET GUN CRIME IN ARIZONA

PHOENIX -- Paul K. Charlton, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona, and the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission announce the award of \$680,000 in PSN grants to eleven criminal justice agencies and one community outreach partner to target gun crime in the District of Arizona. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a program of the Department of Justice and Bureau of Justice assistance to bring together federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to combat gun crimes through education, deterrence, and prosecution. In addition, Project Safe Neighborhoods provides grant funds to criminal justice agencies to enhance their abilities to investigate and prosecute firearms offenses.

Fifteen Project Safe Neighborhoods grants were awarded, focusing on juvenile prevention and education, firearms prosecution, forensic firearms testing, gun intelligence support, research and community outreach.

The Flagstaff Police Department, Parker Police Department, and the Pima County Attorney's Office received grants to fund youth gun safety and violence-deterrence programs.

The Arizona Department of Public Safety, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, and Phoenix Police Department received funding to examine and process firearm and ammunition evidence.

The Arizona Department of Public Safety, Flagstaff Police Department, Gila County Probation Department, Glendale Police Department, and Graham County Probation Department will use the grants to enhance their efforts to identify and arrest prohibited possessors.

Arizonans for Gun Safety, a media partner to Project Safe Neighborhoods, will conduct community outreach activities to prevent gun violence in high risk neighborhoods in Maricopa County and Pima County. They will also create a media campaign to increase awareness of

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Project Safe Neighborhoods.

The City of Phoenix, a continuing Project Safe Neighborhoods partner, has developed its own innovative strategies to combat firearm offenses and violent crime. Two Assistant Phoenix City Prosecutors are housed in the United States Attorney's Office and designated as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys. Dedicated to the federal prosecution of gun crimes in Phoenix, they have convicted more than 100 offenders on federal gun charges since the start of this partnership in October of 2002. Originally funded in part by a Project Safe Neighborhoods prosecution grant, they are now supported entirely by the City of Phoenix as part of its committed campaign to target gun crime.

The City of Phoenix has initiated two other innovative enforcement teams, the Violence Impact Project and the Phoenix Police Gun Squad. Housed in the offices of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), and working in partnership with federal authorities, Gun Squad Officers target firearms offenses in the City of Phoenix. When an arrest is made, the offender may be prosecuted on state or federal charges, as appropriate.

A larger collaborative effort is the Phoenix Violence Impact Project (VIP), formed in the fall of 2003 by the Phoenix Police Department with the goal of reducing violent crime and enhancing community safety. The initiative began to address the number of homicides in Phoenix. VIP soon expanded to reduce all categories of violent crime through focused enforcement and partnership with other criminal justice agencies and the community. Currently the Phoenix Police Department, Phoenix Neighborhood Services Department, Maricopa County Adult Probation and Parole, Juvenile Probation, United States Probation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, ATF, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, the Phoenix Prosecutors Office, and the United States Attorney's Office are partners in the VIP initiative.

About ACJC

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission is a statutorily authorized state entity mandated to carry out various coordinating, monitoring and reporting functions regarding the administration and management of criminal justice programs in Arizona and serves as the granting agent for criminal justice agencies on issues ranging from drugs, gangs, victim compensation and assistance to criminal record improvement initiatives.

Currently the ACJC is the Fiscal Agent for the U.S Attorney's Office, District of Arizona, Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative and is responsible for awarding and monitoring all PSN grant awards throughout the state. Additionally, the Statistical Analysis Center of the ACJC is responsible for collecting, analyzing and reporting on the status of criminal justice issues by impartially evaluating programs and/or policies as requested from local, state and federal criminal justice agencies. The ACJC SAC unit is presently spearheading the research and evaluation of current gun related crime and activities throughout the state to provide data which will assist in the successful implementation of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program within the state of Arizona.

For more information about the ACJC, go to www.azcjc.gov.

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